PRĀNĀYĀMA

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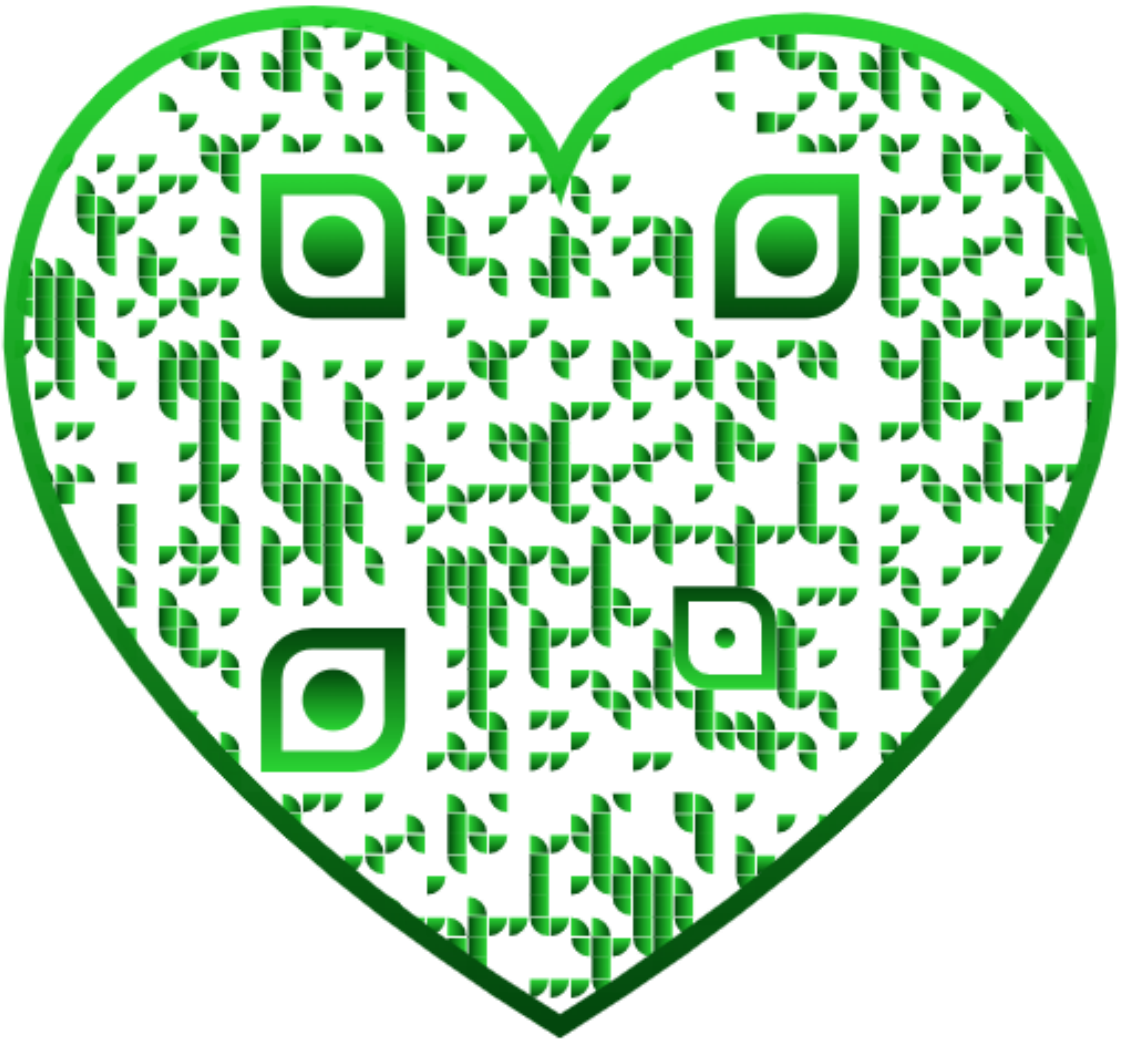


Pranayama practice had been practiced by Indian for thousands of years as the knowledge was passed through words to mouth by great Yoga masters. The ancient masters realized the powers behind Pranayama practice so much so that it had been incorporated into almost every rites and rituals of Indians in the past. The tradition still continues as one or other form and Pranayama is practiced by Priests during birth, marriage, death and other auspicious ceremonies. However, the practice of Pranayama that is done by priests can only bear fruits if the same is done after understanding the philosophy and purpose of practicing Yoga.

Pranayama is one of the most important practices of Hatha Yoga, Patanjali Yoga Sutra and Tantra. Both Hatha Yoga and Patanjali Yoga Sutra suggest the practices of Pranayama after the practitioner perfects meditative posture specially Padamasana. Pranayama is the fourth organ of Ashtang or eight limbed Yoga of Patanjali Yoga Sutra.

Pranayama forms an important component of Yogic Practice. Pranayama is a Science which helps to regulate vital energies through the regulation of breathing. The main purpose of Pranayama is to gain control over the Autonomous Nervous System and through it to influence the mental functions.

Pranayama practice involves slow deep inspiration (Puraka), holding breath (Kumbhaka) and near complete expiration (Rechaka).

The flow of Prana or vital energy to all the vital parts of the body is regulated by these breath-regulating practices.

Regular practice of Pranayama can modulate the sensitivity of chemo-receptors and also makes mind calm and quiet.

Eight types of Pranayama mentioned in the Hatha Yoga Texts.

- **Bhramari**
- **Bhastrika**
- **Moorcha**
- **Plavani**
- **Suryabhedana**
- **Ujjayi**
- **Sheetkari**
- **Sheetali**

Nadishodhan, Surya bhedan, Ujjayi, Sheetali, Bhramari, Bhastrika Pranayama are important Pranayama to be practiced.

Before doing the above Pranayama one must follow the essentials for practicing pranayama as stated below:-

1. **External environment :-** Any place that is well-ventilated and free from noise, insects and flies should be preferred to practice Pranayama.
2. **Right season to begin the practice of Pranayama :-** One should start to practice Pranayama in spring season i.e. March-April and Autumn season i.e. Sept-Oct . One who is already in practice should continue its practice.
3. **Right time : -** Morning is the best suited times to practice Pranayama.
4. **Seat or Asana : -** The seat should be soft, thick and comfortable.
5. **Asana :-** Asana such as Padamasana, Siddhasana, Vajrasana and Sukhasana are considered the most suitable postures for the practice of Pranayama.

PADMASANA

Technique

1) Sit on the ground with the legs extended in front.
2) Place your left foot on the right thigh and right foot on the left thigh.
3) Place the heels in such a way that it is close to the navel.
4) Place your hands on your knees. Join the index finger with the thumb of both hands.
5) Close your eyes.

VAJRASANA

Technique

1. Sit on the ground with the legs extended in front
2. Fold your right leg at knee joint and place the heel of right foot under right buttock in such a way that heel points sideways.
3. Similarly, bend the left leg and place the left foot under the left buttock in such a way that heel points sideways.
4. Keep the trunk and neck erect.
5. Place your hands on the knees.

SIDHASANA

Technique

1. Sit on the ground with the heel of the left foot placed against the anus and the right heel against the genitals.
2. The toes of both feet should be kept between the thighs and calves.
3. The hands should be placed on knees with palms facing upward. Join the index finger with the thumb.
4. Close your eyes.

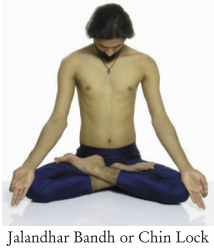
SUKHASANA

Technique

1. Sit on the ground with legs extended forward.
2. Fold your right leg and place it below the left thigh. Repeat the same with the other leg.
3. Palms facing upwards place your right hand on the right knee and left hand on the left knee.
4. Join the index finger with the thumb of both the hands.
5. Close your eyes.

BANDHAS

The three bandhas that should be practiced while doing Pranayama are : -



Jalandhar Bandh or Chin Lock

Jalandhar Bandha or Chin Lock:-

Pressing the chin against the sternum is known as Jalandhar Bandha

Uddiyana Bandh or Abdominal Lock

Uddiyana Bandha or Abdominal Lock: -

Exhaling out air and contracting the abdominal muscles is known as Uddiyana Bandha.

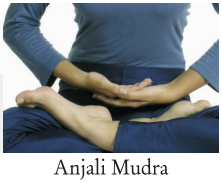
Moolbandha or Anal lock: -

In this Bandha, the anus and the genitals are contracted and pulled up towards the navel.

MUDRAS

Jnana Mudra:-Joining the index finger with the thumb of both the hands and placing it on the knees is called as jnana mudra.

Jnana Mudra



Anjali Mudra

Anjali Mudra:- Placing the right hand on top of left hand close to the navel is called as Anjali Mudra.

NADI SHODHANA PRANAYAMA

Importance of name :

This is one of the fundamental types of *Pranayama.* This practice is also known as Anuloma-viloma as Viloma means produced in the reverse order. This variety gets the name from the fact that the order of using the nostrils for inhalation and exhalation is reversed every time.

Technique :

Sit in any comfortable meditative asana. Keep the head and spine straight. The eyes should be closed. Place right hand in jnana mudra. Close the right nostril with the right thumb. Inhale through the left nostril for 5 counts. After 5 counts of breath release the pressure of thumb from the right nostril and close the left nostril with the ring finger. Exhale through the right nostril for 10 counts, keeping the respiration rate slow, deep and silent. Then, inhale through the right nostril for 5 counts. Exhale through the left nostril for 10 counts. This is one round. Practice 5 rounds or for 3 to 5 minutes, making sure that no sound is produced as the air passes through the nostrils.

Benefits :

- Calms and steadies the mind, improves focus and concentration. Balances left and right hemispheres.
- Strengthens the immune system.
- Manages hypertension.
- Provide sufficient oxygen for the functioning of every cell in our body.
- Removes waste products such as Carbon dioxide and other toxic gases from the body, so that they do not remain in the blood stream.

SURYA BHEDHANA PRANAYAMA

Importance of name:

'Surya' is the sun and 'bhedhana' means to get through.

In surya bhedhana Prananyama all inhalations are done through the right nostril and all exhalations through the left.

Technique :

Sit in any meditative posture e.g. Padmasana, Sukhasana etc. Close your eyes. Keep the left nostril closed with your middle and ring finger of the right hand. Slowly inhale without making any sound through the right nostril as long as you can do it comfortably. Then bring your right hand down and place it on the knees and retain the breath by firmly pressing the chin against the chest (Jalandhara Bandha). Simultaneously contract your rectum muscles (Moolbandh). This point cannot be reached at the very outset. You will have to increase the period of Kumbhaka (retaining breath) gradually. This is the limit of the sphere of practice of Surya Bhedhana Pranayama. Exhale very slowly without making any sound through the left nostril by closing the right nostril followed by releasing the Moolbandh, Uddiyan bandh and Jalandhar bandh. Relax and come back to original position. Do this 3 to 5 times.

Benefits :

- This Pranayama should again and again be performed, as it purifies the brain and destroys the intestinal worms and diseases arising from excess of wind (Vayu).
- It helps to manage rhinitis and various sorts of neuralgia.
- The worms that are found in the frontal sinuses are removed.
- It is good for persons suffering from low blood pressure.

UJJAYI PRANAYAMA

Importance of name :

In this variety both the nostrils are used for inhaling air and the left one for exhaling. The sound represented by the letters 'Aum' is to be produced during the practice, by a partial closure of the glottis. This sound is a peculiarity of this Pranayama and its name is derived from this fact.

Technique :

Sit in any meditative posture. Close the mouth. Inhale slowly through both the nostrils in a smooth, uniform manner. Retain the breath as long as you can do it comfortably and then exhale slowly through the left nostril by closing the right nostril with your right thumb. Expand

the chest when you inhale. During inhalation a peculiar hissing sound is produced owing to the partial closing of Glottis. The sound produced during inhalation should be of a mild and uniform pitch. It should be continuously practiced.

Benefits :

- Removes the heat from the head.
- The practitioner's voice becomes clear and melodious.
- The gastric fire is increased.
- It removes phlegm in the throat and all sorts of pulmonary diseases are managed effectively.
- It is good for Asthmtic patients and also for the patients of respiratory disorders.

SHEETALI PRANAYAMA

As the name indicates this Pranayama cools the system.

Technique :

Sit in Padmasana or in any comfortable position. Place your hands on the knees in Gyan Mudra. Close your eyes gently. Open your mouth, bring the tongue outside the mouth and form a cylindrical shape by bending both the extreme sides of the tongue longitudinally and inhale. While inhaling, the air should pass through the tongue. Close your mouth. Retain the air as long as you can with pressing the chin against the chest (chin lock), simultaneously pull your rectum muscles (anal lock). Then release chin-lock and anal lock and exhale slowly through the nostrils.

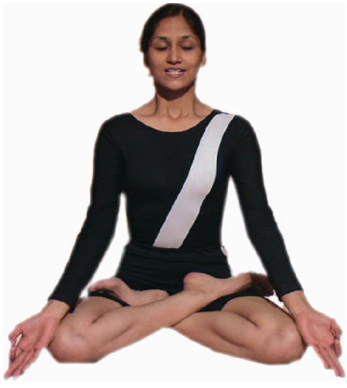
Benefits :

- Beneficial in diseases pertaining to throat and spleen etc.
- Cures indegestion
- Helps in controlling thirst and hunger.
- Lowers blood pressure
- Beneficial in diseases caused by imbalance of pitta dosha (heat)
- Purifies blood.

SHEETKARI PRANAYAMA

As the name indicates this Pranayam also cools the system.

Technique :



Sit in Padmasana or any comfortable asana. Place your hands on the knees in Jnana Mudra. Close your eyes. Touch the palate with your tongue. Close both the jaws with your teeth tightly pressed against each other, keeping the lips open. Draw in the air through the mouth with the hissing sound Siii----. Retain the breath as long as you can hold pressing the chest against the sternum (chin lock) and simultaneously pulling the rectum muscles (anal lock). Exhale slowly from both the nostrils releasing the chin lock and anal lock.

Benefits :

- It quenches thirst and appeases hunger. It cools the body system.
- It destroys gulma (chronic dyspepsis), pleeha, inflammation of various chronic diseases, fever, indigestion, bilious disorders, phlegm.
- When you are caught up in a jungle or any place where you cannot get water, if you feel thirsty, practice this Pranayama. You will be at once relieved of thirst.

Precautions

Those who are suffering from cold, cough or tonsils should not practice this Pranayama.

BHRAMARI PRANAYAMA

The word 'Bhramari' is derived from 'Bhramara', which means a black bee. While practicing this Pranayama, the sound produced resembles the buzzing of a black bee.

Technique :

Sit in the position of Padmasana or any comfortable sitting position. Close your eyes, lips, and ears. Inhale deeply and exhale making a humming sound as black bee does. In order to get more benefits from this Pranayama you should close your both ears with your thumbs and exhale making the humming sound of the bee.

Benefits :

- The practice of Bhramari delights the mind.
- Bhramari is beneficial to pregnant women as preparation for labor.
- Blood circulation improves in the brain, clear the ears, eyes, nose and throat.

BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA

Meaning of the name :

In Sanskrit Bhastrika means 'bellows'. Rapid succession of forcible expulsion is a characteristic feature of Bhastrika. Just as a blacksmith blows his bellows rapidly, so also you should move your breath rapidly.

Technique :

Sit in Padmasana. Keep the body, neck and head erect. Close the mouth. Inhale from left nostril by closing your right nostril and exhale from right nostril by closing your left nostril. Similarly inhale from left nostril and exhale from right nostril. This practice should be done forcefully. Continue doing this for 25 times. The sound produced during inhalation and exhalation should be like a bellows of the blacksmith. When you practice this Pranayama a

hissing sound is produced. The practitioner should start with rapid expulsions of breath following one another in rapid succession. When the required number of expulsions, say ten for a round, is finished, the final expulsion is followed by a deepest possible inhalation. The breath is suspended as long as it could be done with comfort. Then deepest possible exhalation is done very slowly. The end of this deep exhalation completes one round of Bhastrika. Rest for a while after one round is over by taking a few normal breaths. This will give yourself some rest which makes you fit for starting the second round. Do three rounds daily in the morning. You can do another three rounds in the evening also. Busy people who find it difficult to do three rounds of Bhastrika can do one round at least. This also will keep them quite fit.

Benefits :

- Bhastrika relieves inflammation of the throat.
- It increases gastric fire, destroys phlegm, removes diseases of the nose and chest.

Publicity Material Not For Sale

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